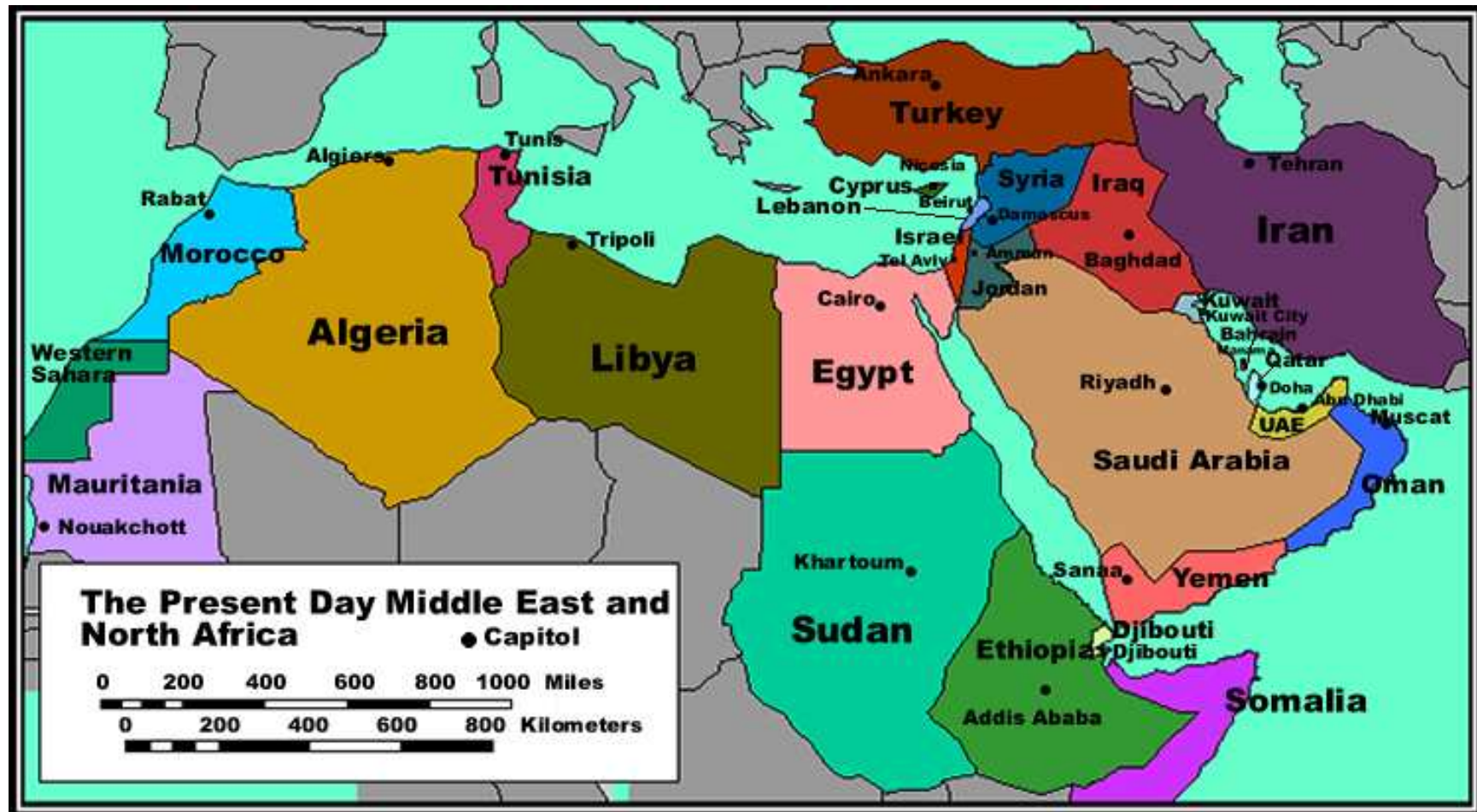


# Guidelines to Effective Networking

In the  
Middle East & North Africa

# Middle East & North Africa



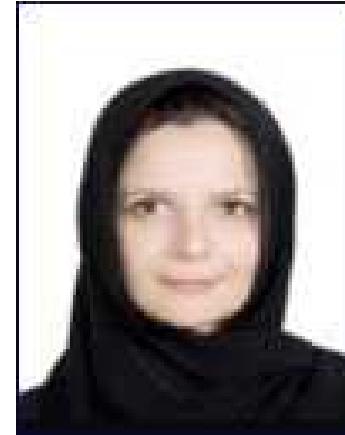
Source: <http://ocw.nd.edu/arabic-and-middle-east-studies/>

# Focal points

- Preparation is key – research business & culture
- First impressions count
- Establishing trust
- Presence
- Partner anyone?
- Networking opportunities

# Prepare - Culture

- Internet – news & articles
- Use caution BUT beware of media sensationalism
- Read local newspapers online
  - Arab News ([www.arabnews.com](http://www.arabnews.com))
  - Jordan Times ([www.jordantimes.com](http://www.jordantimes.com))
- Religion is a big part of the culture
- Proper attire – especially for women



# Prepare - Business

- Chamber of Commerce in the target city
  - Competition, demand, infrastructure
- Zawya ([www.zawya.com](http://www.zawya.com))
- Enforceability of contracts
- Nationalization issues
- Monetary policy, currency convertibility

# First Impressions

- Use words in Arabic for greeting
  - Asalam Alaikum – Greeting
  - Shukran – Thank you
  - Ma'asalama – Good bye
  - T'fadal – when you hand out your business card
- Allow pleasantries enough time
- Respect prayer calls
- Shaking hands may be tricky

# Establishing Trust

- Share your information first
- Point out common grounds
- Talk about a positive fact you learned
- Show respect
- Accept invitations
- Avoid political discussions

# Presence is Key

- Cultural norms require physical presence
- Social and business relationships are intertwined
- Trust is established with frequent visits
- Spend time socializing – time well spent
- Strike a relationship
  - Befriend a local player
  - Open doors
  - Ink up an MOU or agreement



# Partnership

- Invest time & effort in sourcing the right partner
- Laws in ME dictate local ownership in most countries
- Check references, test the relationship
- Consult a local lawyer on legal structure
- Reputation, Reputation, Reputation!
- Be fair, you need each other

# Introductory Seminar/Workshop

- An excellent tool to introduce your company
- May be arranged in concert with an influential and reputable local player
- Often done privately
- Increased exposure via local news media if done publicly

# Local Business Groups

- A great tool
- In Saudi Arabia, the American Businessmen of Jeddah ([www.abj-sa.com](http://www.abj-sa.com))
- Middle East Council of American Chambers of Commerce ([www.abcgcc.us](http://www.abcgcc.us))

# Conferences & Trade Fairs

- Provide opportunities to network
- Possibly showcase your company's products/services
- Main events in the region include:
  - Global Competitiveness Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
  - Jeddah Economic Forum in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
  - Media & Marketing Show in Dubai, UAE
  - Cityscape Dubai Conference (Real estate)
  - The Education Project in Bahrain
  - MENA Renewable Energy in Dubai
  - [www.middleeastevents.com](http://www.middleeastevents.com)

# Other Pointers

- Ensure ability to follow up
- Write on business cards reminders
- Taking photos is not always welcome
- No maybe yes and yes maybe no
- Families are private
- Titles are important
- Names can be confusing